

Bible 241
A
NEW TRANSLATION
OF THE
PRAYER of HABAKKUK,
THE
PRAYER of MOSES,
AND THE *Bible D. T. Hab.*
CXXXIX PSALM;
+ Ps. cx.
WITH A
COMMENTARY on each.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED
NOTES Critical and Explanatory.

By WILLIAM GREEN, M.A.
Fellow of CLARE HALL.

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NEW TRANSLATION
OF THE
PRAYER OF HABAKUK
THE
PRAYER OF MOSES
AND THE
CXXIX Psalm

COMMENTARY
NOTES Critical and Explanatory

BY WILLIAM GORDON
D.D. OF CHALMERS

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THE P R E F A C E.

I HAVE long been of Opinion, that most of the obscure Passages of the poetical Scriptures may be cleared from that Darknefs and Perplexity, in which they now lye involved. Under this Persuasion, I applied myself to a particular Examination of *The Song of Deborah*; which was, not long since, offered to the Publick. *The Prayer of Habakkuk* now follows; a Part of Scripture, acknowledged on all Hands to be obscure in almost every Period of it. To this are added new Versions of *The Prayer of Moses*, and of *The CXXXIX Psalm*, as reduced to Metre by Bishop Hare. In drawing up these Pieces, the *Masoretical Text* has been critically examined, and the *Hebrew Metre* strictly attended to; which was the Method followed in *The Song of Deborah*. And if the Reader shall judge that I have succeeded in these, he will, I hope, be convinced as well as myself, that it is the right Method; and that it is not possible to clear the Scriptures from Obscurity, if we adhere too servilely to the *Masoretical Text*. Almost every Examination of this Text affords fresh Proofs of its Incorrectness. One of these, which occurred to me while I was drawing up this Preface, I shall lay before the Reader; and it is such a striking Proof, as might, one would think, of itself suffice, to convince the most prejudiced, and demonstrate the Necessity of revising the Text.

The Passage I mean, is in the XX Chapter of *Job*, where Zophar is describing the inevitable Fate of the wicked Man, according to our Translation in these Words. *Job* 24. *He shall flee from the iron Weapon, and the Bow of Steel shall strike him through.* *Job* 25. *It is drawn and cometh out of the Body; yea, the glittering Sword cometh out of his Gall: Terrors are upon him.* *Job* 26. *All Darknefs shall be hid in his secret Places.* Words,

it must be owned, very intricate and perplexed ! What principally embarrasses them is the Want of a Nominative Case in the beginning of the 25th Period ; which the *Seventy* had in the Copy they translated from, and which they render by *βελος*. If then we can recover this Word, the Text will be set right. And this I think we may do, only by the Change and Transposition of a single Letter in the first Word of this Period. That is, if instead of *הלש* we read *הלש* (which in Psalm LXXVI. 4. signifies an *Arrow*, and is exactly equivalent to *barak*) we shall have, I apprehend, the very Word which the *Seventy* render by *βελος* ; and the Period will run thus,

*vajjeze rejep miggevah,
ubarak mimmemorato.*

" In the next Period, if we read *col* before the plural Noun *emim*, which at present comes after it, the following Sense will arise from the *Hebrew*.

Should he flee away from the iron Weapon,
The Bow of Steel shall strike him through.

For either the sharp Arrow shall pass through his Body ;
Or the glittering Sword through his Gall.

All the Horrors of *Death* shall come upon him ;
And Darkness is laid up in Store for him.

Such Instances as this (and there are many such to be met with,) will ever convince the impartial, that the Text of the Old Testament has suffered from Time, or from Transcribers ; and that before we begin to translate, we must endeavour to restore it to its primitive Integrity. During the last two Centuries, learned Men have tried all other Expedients, but in vain : the Fruitlessness therefore of their Labours should direct us to this, the only Expedient left.

If a critical Skill in Hebrew and the other Oriental Languages, if a large Fund of Theological and Classical Learning, if great Industry in consulting Versions and Commentators, if Strength of Parts and Maturity of Judgment, were sufficient to clear such Passages as this without
altering

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altering the Text, we might reasonably have expected it from the great *Schultens*, whose Title to these was unquestionable, and who was more particularly concerned to do it, as he would not allow the least *Alteration* to be made. But with all these Advantages, what has he done more than others before him? Why really, it grieves one to say it, very little. When he translates a Passage of this kind, if he can *force* a Sense upon it, he is so blind to the Blemishes of the Text, as sometimes to cry them up for Beauties; if he cannot, rather than *alter* a Letter, he is content to let it speak Nonsense. Lest this Charge should be thought too heavy, I will produce an Instance from his Version of the *Proverbs*. The Original Text of Chapter VII. 22. has been injured by Transcribers; but the Blemish is such, that a Man of *Schultens*' Penetration, would he only have opened his Eyes, must have discerned and corrected it. This however was not to be expected from him: He must go on in his own Way, and indeed in any Way rather than this. The Translations of others are to be rejected, the ancient Versions examined, and the *Arabic Language* ransacked — For what? Why truly, to present us with this very curious and instructive Version. *ψ. 22. He went headlong after her; as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter; and as bound Head to Feet, for the Correction of a Fool. ψ. 23. Even till a Dart strike through his Liver: as a Bird basteeth to the Snare, and knoweth not, that it is for his Life.*

Here is a remarkable Instance how very little Men of the greatest Abilities are capable of doing, while they obstinately shut their Eyes against the Blemishes of the *Masoretical Text*. This learned Professor was utterly averse to *altering* the Text, but not averse, it seems, to expose the *Word of God* to Scorn by such a Translation as this. He was afraid to change a Letter, though the Sense necessarily required it; but not afraid to make a *sacred Writer* speak, as he himself would have been ashamed to speak. How much would it have been to the Honour of this great Man, if he had followed the Example of the celebrated Professor of *Hebrew* in the University of *Oxford*; who has a Veneration for the *Masoretical Text*, but none for the Mistakes of its Publishers, or the Errors of its Transcribers; adhering to it when he can make a Sense worthy of the inspired Writers, but when otherwise, not afraid to amend it;

and

and who by the Change of a single Letter in this very Passage has made such good Sense of it, as needs neither Comment to explain it, nor his great Name to recommend it.

He straightway goeth after her,
As an Ox goeth to the Slaughter ;
Or as an Hart boundeth into the Toyls,
Till a Dart strike through his Liver ;
Or as a Bird hasteth to the Snare,
And knoweth not that it is for his Life.

To make an inspired Writer speak Nonsense, or what compared with the Context is little better than Nonsense, is the most glaring Absurdity imaginable ; and yet if we tenaciously adhere to the *Masoretical Text*, it will oftentimes scarce be possible to avoid it. If then we would have the Scriptures received for, what they really are, *inspired Writings*, we must depart from this Text where it is faulty ; and no longer translate for genuine Readings, the palpable Blunders of Transcribers. From what has been done by those, who are blindly attached to this Text, it plainly appears that a good Translation is not to be expected from them. It is high time therefore to turn our Eyes upon those, who, after they have used every Help to make the Old Testament intelligible, are not afraid, when all others fail, to examine and correct the Text. This is a Liberty which our own Translators have sometimes taken ; and would have taken more frequently, if they had lived in these Days. A Liberty, which if used with Judgment and Discretion, can be attended with no bad Consequences, but may be attended with the happiest and best. In short, it is the only Expedient that can effectually recommend the Old Testament to the Admiration and Esteem of all that peruse it, by making it speak like what in Truth it is, *The Oracle of God*.

A
NEW VERSION
OF THE

Third Chapter of HABAKKUK.

A PRAYER OF THE PROPHET HABAKKUK.

- 1 **O** JEHOVAH, I have heard thy Report:
I am in Pain, O JEHOVAH, for thy Work;
In the midst of the Years revive it.
- 2 In the midst of the Years shew Compassion;
In Wrath remember Mercy.
- 3 God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from mount Paran.
- 4 His Majesty covered the Heavens,
And his Glory filled the Earth.

The Translation in the English Bible.

*A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon years made known: in wrath remember mercy.
Sbigionath. God came from Teman, and the Holy One
O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and from mount Paran. Selah. his glory covered
was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the heavens, and the earth was full of his
the midst of the years, in the midst of the praise.*

COMMENTARY.

HABAKKUK having been informed by God of his Design to send the Jews into Captivity for their Sins, and of his Determination that they should serve the Babylonians seventy Years, the Prophet takes upon him, as became his Office, to interceed with God in their Behalf.

He begins his Prayer for them, with laying before JEHOVAH (Period 1. & 2.) the Distress into which he was thrown by the Judgments denounced against them; beseeching him, that he would shorten the Time determined for their Captivity, and restore them to their Country before it was half expired.

The Prophet, having offered up his Petition for shortening their Captivity, proceeds in the next place (from Per. 3. to the 21.) to recount the wonderful

Works

- 5 His Brightness was as the Brightness of the Sun;
He had Rays of Light beaming from his Hand,
And there was the Hiding-Place of his Power.
- 6 The Pestilence walked before Him,
And devouring Fire followed after Him.
- 7 He stood, and measured out the Land;
He beheld, and scattered the Nations.
- 8 The eternal Mountains dispersed,
The everlasting Hills bowed,
The everlasting Ways owned their Lord.
- 9 I saw the Tents of Cushan in Consternation,
And the Tent-Curtains of the Land of Midian trembled.

The Translation in the English Bible.

*And his brightness was as the light; he had
horns coming out of his hand: and there was
the hiding of his power.*

*Before him went the pestilence, and burning
coals went forth at his feet.*

He stood, and measured the earth: he be-

*held, and drove asunder the nations; and the
everlasting mountains were scattered, the per-
petual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.*

*I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction:
and the curtains of the land of Midian did*

tremble.

COMMENTARY.

Works which JEHOVAH had formerly wrought, to deliver his People from Egyptian Slavery, and to put them in possession of the Land of Canaan; intimating by this, that he would, in his good Time, shew himself equally powerful, in delivering them from the Babylonish Captivity, and restoring them to their own Land.

In recounting these wonderful Works, *Habakkuk* first exhibits a Description of JEHOVAH, as King and Commander of the ten thousands of *Israel*, marching at their head in a Pillar of a Cloud, to conduct them and put them in possession of the promised Land. When JEHOVAH sets out (Per. 3.) from *Teman* and *Paran*, so great is the Majesty and Glory with which he is arrayed, that (Per. 4.) the Heaven and the Earth are too little to contain it. His Brightness (Per. 5.) like that of the meridian Sun, is insupportable; and his Power irresistible; the Pestilence and devouring Fire (Per. 6.) attending him, to do Execution, upon the Enemy, at his Command. As soon as he enters the Land of *Canaan* (Per. 7.) he takes Possession of it as rightful Lord; and the seven Nations, conscious that they had forfeited it by their wickedness, fly at the Sight of him. The Mountains of the Land (Per. 8.) disperse to make way for him, the Hills bow to pay him obeisance, and the High-ways own him for their Lord. And so great is the Dread of him, that (Per. 9.) the neighbouring Nations tremble, while he passes by.

After

PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.

9

- 10 Was JEHOVAH displeased at the Rivers?
Was thine Indignation against the Rivers?
- 11 Was thy Wrath against the Sea,
When thou rodest on thine Horses
And thy Chariots of Salvation?
- 12 No; Thou laidst bare thy Bow to fight for Israel,
According to thy Oath unto the Tribes, and thy Promise;
- 13 Thou cleavest the dry Land into Rivers;
The Mountains saw Thee, and were in Pangs.
- 14 The overflowing Water hastened away;
The Deep uttered its Voice,
And lifted up its Hands on high.
- 15 The Sun and Moon stood still in their Habitation:
By their Light, thine Arrows flew abroad;
And by their Shining, thy glittering Spear.

The Translation in the English Bible.

Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the Rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?

Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah, thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.

The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.

The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

COMMENTARY.

After this Description of JEHOVAH, the first of his wonderful Works, is the Passage through the *Red Sea*; where the Prophet represents him, (Per. 10. 11. & 12.) as appearing at the Head of the *Israelites* in his Chariot of War, with his Bow drawn in his Hand, to rescue them from their cruel Oppressors, the *Egyptians*; and to give them the Land of *Canaan*, according to the Oath which he swore unto them.

The next, is JEHOVAH's giving them (Per. 13.) Water to drink in the Wilderness; where the Mountains tremble at his Presence.

The next, his Passage (Per. 14.) over *Jordan*; where the Waters, testifying their ready Obedience to his Will, open to the right Hand and left, to make a Way for his People to pass through.

The next, his Interposition at *Joshua's* Engagement with the *Amorites*; when the Sun and Moon (Per. 15.) stood still to give them Time to discomfit their Enemies.

B

The

- 16 Thou marchest through the Land in Indignation,
And trampledst under foot the Nations in Anger.
- 17 Thou wentest forth for the Salvation of thy People,
For the Salvation of thine Anointed.
- 18 Thou woundedst the Head of the House of the Wicked;
Thou rasedst the Foundation even to the Rock;
Thou piercedst thro' with thy Scepter the Head of the Villages.
- 19 When they came out as a Whirlwind to scatter us,
Their Rejoicing was, as when about
To devour the poor Man in Secret.
- 20 Thou marchest with thine Horses to the western Sea,
To the Heap of great Waters.
- 21 I heard *thy Report*, and my Bowels were troubled;
My Lips quivered at thy Voice;
A Wasting entered into my Bones,
And my Steps tottered under me.

The Translation in the English Bible.

Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst tread the heathen in anger.

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed: thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.

Thou didst strike through with his slaves the head of his villages: they came out as a

whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my self, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

COMMENTARY.

The last wonderful Works which the Prophet recounts, were performed after this Engagement, when JEHOVAH marched before them to execute Vengeance (Per. 16.) on the *Canaanites* who had filled up the Measure of their Iniquities, and to protect (Per. 17.) the *Israelites* whom he had chosen for his peculiar People; destroying utterly (Per. 18.) the Princes of *Canaan* and their States, at a Time when they made sure (Per. 19.) of *Israel* for their Prey; and giving his own People (Per. 20.) entire Possession of their Country, from the River *Jordan* on the East, to the *Mediterranean Sea* on the West.

The Prophet having recounted, for the present Encouragement of the faithful, the wonderful Works which God had formerly done for his People, returns again to set forth (Per. 21.) in what Manner he was affected with the Judgments de-

PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.

II

- 22 Oh that I may be at Rest before the Day of Distress,
When the Invader shall come up against the People with his Troops.
- 23 For then the Fig-tree shall not flourish,
Nor shall Fruit be on the Vines;
The Produce of the Olive shall fail,
And the Fields shall yield no Food;
The Flock shall be cut off from the Fold,
And no Herd shall be left in the Stalls.
- 24 Nevertheless, I will rejoice in JEHOVAH,
I will be exceeding joyful in the God of my Salvation;
- 25 The Lord JEHOVAH is my Strength;
He will make my Feet like Hinds Feet,
And cause me to tread again on my own High-Places.

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN ON HIS STRINGED INSTRUMENTS.

The Translation in the English Bible.

*Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:
Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will*

joy in the God of my salvation.

The Lord GOD is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

COMMENTARY.

denounced against them: And takes Occasion from thence to pray (Per. 22.) that he may be gathered to his Fathers in Peace, before the King of *Babylon* should invade *Judea*, and carry the People away captive; adding, as a Reason for his Prayer, a Description (Per. 23.) of the Desolation which should then come upon the Land.

After this, *Habakkuk* concludes his Prayer for the *Jews*, with declaring (Per. 24.) that, whatever became of himself, he would still rejoice in Hope, that God would visit his People again with his Salvation. And then (Per. the last.) glorying in JEHOVAH as their Strength, the Prophet rests assured, that he would restore, in due Time, the captive *Jews* to their own Land, giving them the Agility of the Hind, to return once more to the fertile and darling Hills of *Judea*.

NOTES

ON

THE PRAYER OF THE PROPHET HABAKKUK.

PERIOD 1. Lin. 1. O JEHOVAH, *I have heard thy Report*) That is, what thou hast revealed to me, concerning the Captivity of thy People, and the Defolation of thy Land.

Lin. 2. *I am in Pain*) All Translations, both ancient and modern, supply the Copulative, and connect this Verb with the Words foregoing. But, besides that this makes the Pronoun affixed to the next Verb redundant, it is not agreeable either to Sense or Metre. What has prevented the Learned from seeing that *jarsti, I am in Pain*, must be construed with *pepleca, thy Work*, is this, the Preposition *le, for*, is not expressed but understood; and yet nothing is more common in the poetical Scriptures. The Reader may see this Preposition expressed after this Verb in Prov. xxxi. 21.

She is in no Pain for her Household because of the Snow:

For all her Household are clothed with double Garments.

Lin. 2. *I am in Pain, O JEHOVAH, for thy Work*) The People of God are called in Isai. xlv. 11. the *Work of God*. Thus saith JEHOVAH, the Holy One of Israel, and the MAKER of him, Do ye enquire of me concerning Things to come? Do ye command me concerning my Sons, and concerning the WORK of my Hands? See likewise Deut. xxxii. 4. The Jews were peculiarly God's Work; because he chose them to be his People before all the Nations of the Earth, redeemed them from Slavery, gave them a Land to inhabit, prescribed them Laws to observe, and vouchsafed to become their Ruler and King. The Meaning then of these Words must be this, I am in Pain for the Calamities which thy People will undergo during so long a Captivity.

Lin. 3. *In the midst of the Years revive it*) To send a People into Captivity, is to inflict Civil Death upon them; and to restore them to their own Land, is to revive or give them a new Life. Thus the final Restoration of the Jewish People is called by St. Paul, *Life from the Dead*. In these Words therefore the Prophet prays, that God would restore the Jews to their own Land before the Seventy Years, determined for their Captivity, were half expired. In this Sense of the Verb it is, that the Psalmist expostulates with God, Psa. lxxxv. 6.

Wilt Thou not return and REVIVE us,

That thy People may rejoice in Thee?

And then follows a Petition (Per. 7.) of the same Import with that which follows in the Prophet;

Shew us, O JEHOVAH, thy MERCY,

And grant us thy Salvation.

Per. 2. Lin. 1. *Shew Compassion*) The Metre led me to observe, that a Word is wanting in the Original; and the next Line suggested to me, what that Word probably was; namely, *rašem*, which is exactly equivalent to *rašem*, and is the same Word which is translated in the Note above MERCY; but I was forced here to render it *Compassion*, because *rašem* is translated *Mercy* in the next Line.

Per. 3.) *Teman* and *Mount Paran* were two Stations of the *Israelites*, when they sojourned in the Wilderness; the former situated in the Land of *Edom*, the latter in the Wilderness of *Paran*. It was from these, that God led them forth to give them Possession of the Land of *Canaan*. And as he vouchsafed to become the King of the *Israelites*, he constantly resided amongst them in a Cloud of Glory. When they marched forward, he went before

before them to conduct them, and search out a Place to pitch their Tents in. When they engaged in Battle, he visibly fought for them from the Cloud, and employed the Artillery of Heaven in the Destruction of their Enemies.

In this Passage, *Habakkuk* seems to have had Deut. xxxiii. 2. in his Eye; where *Moses*, speaking of JEHOVAH's conducting the *Israelites* in the Cloud of Glory, mentions one of the Stations here specified:

JEHOVAH came from Sinai,
And arose upon them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And went with ten thousands from Kadesh.

Per. 4. Lin. 2. *And his Glory, utbillato*) This Word, which is plainly equivalent to *bodo, his Majesty*, is, I apprehend, the Nominative Case to the Verb. And since it comes from a Verb which signifies to *shine* as well as to *praise*, it may in this place properly be translated *Glory*.

Per. 5. Lin. 1. *And his Brightness, venogab*) The *Vau, and*, is redundant in Sense before this Word, and wanting after it. Who then can doubt but that it was first dropped in transcribing, and then placed in the Margin; and afterwards prefixed to it instead of being affixed, the constructive Form of the Word being changed into the absolute.

Here the redundant *Vau* is only inelegant; but in some Places it contributes to pervert the Sense. The Perplexity of Job. xxi. 29. is owing principally to a redundant *Vau*. If we throw this out, and read the Period thus,

*ei tassil, vattomer, gevati;
vesab ynnaim jessv.*

we shall restore Sense to a Passage, which at present has none; and have both the Context and the *Alex. Copy* of the *Seventy* to justify us. In the next Period, *It* can neither signify an Island, nor be a defective Reading of *an, not*; for how should a Man be delivered for the Purity of his Hands who is *not* innocent. It seems rather to be a defective Reading of *eloh, God*; and possibly the Affix to the last Word of this Period ought to be *Vau* instead of *Caph* final, for which it has frequently been mistaken. If the Learned should agree with me in these Emendations, then the Sentiment of both the Periods may be illustrated by comparing them with the 24, 25, 26 and 27 Periods of the xviii Psalm, and the Translation of them will run as follows.

When thou shalt humble thyself, and say, It is my Pride;
Then he shall save him, that is lowly in his own Eyes.

God shall deliver the innocent Man,
And he shall be delivered for the Purity of his hands.

Let the Reader turn to the Place, and see with what Weight and Dignity these Words close the Speech of *Eliphaz*.

Ibid. His Brightness was as the Brightness of the Sun) When the Glory of JEHOVAH shone through the Cloud, the Lustre and Brightness of it was like that of the Sun at Noon-Day. The Word *or*, which our Translators render Light, is here used by Way of Eminence for the Sun, and is so rendered by them in Job xxxi. 26. And it is remarkable that *Moses* in Deut. xxxiii. 2. cited above, speaks of this Glory in Words properly used of the Sun, such as *arising* and *shining forth* upon them.

Per. 5. Lin. 2. *He had Rays of Light beaming from his Hand*) *Moses* in the parallel Place Deut. xxxiii. 2. (if with the ingenious Mr. Kennicott we read *or* instead of *dat*), expresses himself thus,

Fire from his right Hand gave them Light:

Or (if we retain the *Chaldee* Word *dat*) thus,

Fire from his right Hand was a Signal unto them;

that is, when to strike their Tents and march forward, and when to pitch them again.

Per.

Per. 5. Lin. 3. *And there was the Hiding-Place of his Power*) As the Cloud was a Hiding-Place or Veil to the Glory of JEHOVAH, when it did not shine forth, so was it considered as the Hiding-Place of his Power, when not manifested in Act. We have an Instance where both of these were manifested from the Cloud at the same Time. In Num. xvi. 42. it is said, *that they looked toward the Tabernacle of the Congregation; and behold, the Cloud covered it, and the GLORY of JEHOVAH appeared.* And it is added ver. 46. *that Wrath was gone out from JEHOVAH, and the PLAGUE, a signal Manifestation of his Power, was begun.* It is true, the Pestilence and devouring Fire are represented as attending him here; but then it is only to be in Readiness to manifest his Power; and therefore the Cloud may still be considered as the Hiding-Place of it.

As the Cloud was the Hiding-Place of JEHOVAH's Power and Glory, the Ark of the Covenant, over which the Cloud resided, is expressly called in Psal. lxxviii. 61. by these two Names:

He delivered his POWER into Captivity,
And his GLORY into the Hands of his Enemies.

Per. 6. Lin. 2. *Devouring Fire, rest*) This Word is variously translated. In Psal. lxxviii. 48. it means *the Fire*, mentioned Exod. ix. 23. *which ran along the Ground*, and may properly be translated Lightning or devouring Fire.

He gave up their Cattle to the Hail,
And their Flocks to the Lightnings.

And so, I apprehend, it signifies here; Lightning or devouring Fire, being frequently represented in the poetical Scriptures as attending the Divine Presence. Thus Psal. l. 3.

A Fire devoureth before Him,
And a Tempest rageth around Him.

See likewise Psal. xviii. 8. lxxviii. 63. and xcvi. 3. If however any one should think this Word exactly equivalent to *daber*, *the Pestilence*, he may translate it, *The burning Disease, or Ulcer.* But this does not carry with it the Notion of instantaneous Death, which in my Opinion it should do.

Per. 7. Lin. 1. *He stood and measured out the Land*) It was customary for a Conqueror, as soon as he became possessed of a Country, to measure it out and divide it amongst his People. Thus David,

I will triumph and divide Sichem,
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.

Hence JEHOVAH, who takes Possession of the Land of Canaan upon the Flight and Cession of its guilty Inhabitants, is represented as dividing it amongst the Tribes of Israel.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *He beheld and scattered the Nations*) Such was the Dread which fell upon the seven wicked Nations of Canaan at the Approach of JEHOVAH, that they are represented as flying before Him, and leaving him in quiet Possession of the Land, which they had forfeited by their Wickedness.

Per. 8. *The eternal Mountains &c.*) Not only the Inhabitants of Canaan betrayed a Consciousness that the Land was forfeited to the Donor of it, but even the Land itself is poetically represented, as betraying the same. — I translate *lo*, *owned their Lord*, because the literal Sense of it, *were for Him, or on His Side*, amounts to the same.

Per. 9. Lin. 1. *I saw the Tents of Cushan in Consternation*) Since Moses's Wife who was a Midianite, is called Num. xii. 1. a Cushite, Cushan may be here only another Name for Midian: and then the two Members of this Period will be equivalent. But if it should be different, then it must mean an Arabian Nation which dwelt in Tents near Midian, and which was seized with the same Consternation at the Approach of JEHOVAH, as they. — For *tašat on*, Father Houbigant reads *šatatim*, which seems to be the true Reading. Indeed, the Sense which the Place requires, had directed me to translate it as I have done, before I saw his Work.

Per.

Per. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.) We can never sufficiently admire the Strength and Spirit, as well as Justness and Propriety of this Description. The Design of the Prophet was to give us right Conceptions of JEHOVAH, as King and Commander of the ten thousands of Israel. And what more proper Circumstances could he have chosen, to inspire us with a just Idea of his Magnificence and Greatness on this Occasion? The Glory with which He is arrayed is such, as filleth the Heaven and the Earth. A Glory which arises, not from the Pomp of external Grandeur and the Parade of honourable Followers, but from HIMSELF. His Power is the Terror of all the World around Him; the Insignia of it being, not the Sword or the Fasces, but the Pestilence and devouring Fire. And so great is the Dread of Him, that the Canaanites fly at his Approach, the Land trembles at his Presence, and the Nations around are not able to hide their Dismay. Such is *Habakkuk's* Description of JEHOVAH, simple and plain, but yet grand and sublime; as much excelling the Pagan Descriptions of *Jupiter*, as Light surpasses Darkness. *David* indeed has given us a Description Psal. xlviii. 7.—16. in which the Majesty and Greatness of JEHOVAH are more remarkably displayed than here. But then the Occasion upon which it was given, served the more illustriously to display them. It is a Description of JEHOVAH *when he was wroth*, when his Power was actually manifested as well as his Glory, *when He bowed the Heavens and came down*, to rescue him from his Enemies, to whom he had delegated his royal Supremacy over *Israel*.

Per. 11. *Was thy Wrath against the Sea &c.*) When thou appearedst, O JEHOVAH, at the Red Sea in thy Chariot of War, with thy Bow drawn in thy Hand, Was it that thou wast displeased with the Sea? The Answer follows in the next Period, which I have expressed in the Translation as well as I could, by the Addition of three or four Words in Italicks; namely, it was only to fight for *Israel*, and conduct them safe to the Land of *Canaan*, which he had promised them with an Oath.

Per. 11. Lin. 3. *Thy Chariots of Salvation*) If we would know what these Chariots were, *Moses* will inform us, Deut. xxxiii. 26.

There is no God like the God of *Jeshurun*,
Who rideth on the Heavens for thy Help,
And on the Clouds for thine Advancement.

And if we want to be told what were the Weapons, with which JEHOVAH fought at the *Red Sea*, another sacred Poet describes them, Psal. lxxvii. 17, and 18.

The Clouds poured down Water;
The Heavens uttered their Voice;
And thine Arrows flew abroad,

The Voice of thy Thunder was in the Whirlwind:
Thy Lightnings blazed o'er the World;
The Earth trembled and shook.

Per. 12. Lin. 2.) If the critical Reader would consult Psal. cv. 9. or his Concordance upon *sehuat*, *Oaths*, he may possibly be convinced that the Preposition *le*, *to*, has been dropped before *massot*, *tribes*. The *Seventy* had it in their Copy, and render it by *in*.—In the next place, both Sense and Metre require *Vau*, *and*, before *omer*, thy *Promise*.

Per. 13. Lin. 2. *The Mountains saw Thee, and were in Pangs*) All Nature was in Commotion at the Approach of Nature's God.

The Mountains skipped like Rams,
And the Hills like affrighted Lambs.

Tremble, thou Earth, at the Presence of the Lord,
At the Presence of the God of Jacob;

Who turneth the hard Rock into a standing Water,
And the flint-stone into a running Fountain.

Per.

Per. 14. *The overflowing Water basted away &c.*) When the *Israelites* passed over *Jordan*, this River overflowed its Banks. But as soon as the Priests who bare the Ark entered into it, the Waters, rearing themselves up on the right Hand and on the left, parted asunder with a mighty Noise; those on the right standing on a Heap, and those on the left falling into the dead Sea. See *Josh. iii. 15*, and *16*.

Per. 15. Lin. 2, and 3. *By their Light, thine Arrows flew abroad &c.*) When *Jeshua* fought against the *Amorites*, at his Command the Sun and Moon stood still to give them Time for the Destruction of their Enemies. And while these gave them Light,

JEHOVAH sent out his Arrows, and scattered them;
He shot forth his Lightnings, and destroyed them.

Ibid. Flew abroad, jeballeu) This Verb signifies any progressive Motion; and should always be translated by such a Word as best suits the Subject: When used of Ships, it should be translated *sailing*; when of Rivers, *running*; when of any Thing that moves upon Wings, *flying*. *To walk* (as this Verb is rendered *Psal. civ. 3*.) upon Wings, is such an Impropriety, as is not easily to be endured. By the Alteration of this Word, and the Transposition of a Line to avoid a Parenthesis, the four first Periods of this Psalm will run thus,

- 1 O JEHOVAH my God, thou art transcendently great,
Thou art cloathed with Majesty and Grandeur.
- 2 Bless JEHOVAH, O my Soul,
Who arrayeth himself with Light, as with a Garment,
And spreadeth out the Heavens like a Canopy:
- 3 Who flooreth his Chambers with Waters;
Who maketh the Clouds his Chariot,
And flieth on the Wings of the Wind.
- 4 Who maketh his Angels Winds,
And his Ministers a Flame of Fire.

Per. 16. Lin. 2. *Thou trampledst under foot the Nations in Anger*) JEHOVAH is here represented as marching before his People through the Land of *Canaan* in his Chariot of War, and trampling under foot those that rise up against him. It is in the same figurative Language that *David* speaks of him in *Psal. lx. 12*.

Through God we shall behave valiantly;
And He shall trample under foot our Enemies.

Ibid.) The Metre shews that the Copulative has been dropped before the first Word of this Line. And the same may be observed upon the second Line of the ninth Period. The Greek Version retains it in both Places.

Per. 17.) The *Seventy* make the two Members of this Period equivalent; and the Metre does the same, by rejecting *et* in the second Member, and placing it before *roſ* in the Verse below. — The *Seventy* make *Χριστος*, *anointed*, equivalent to *λαος του Θεου*, *the People of God*, not only in this Place, but in *Psal. xxviii. 7*. The Apostle to the Hebrews does the same *Chap. xi. 25* and *26*, which ought to be translated thus, *Chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the PEOPLE OF GOD, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season: Esteeming the Reproach of the ANOINTED* (i. e. of the *Israelites*) *greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the Recompense of the Reward.*

Per. 18. Lin. 1.) No Sense can be made of this Line, unless we suppose that the *Mem* before *bit* belongs to the next Word, and that the two Words should be read *bit refugim*, *the House of the Wicked*.

Ibid. Lin. 2.) The *Seventy*, and indeed all the ancient Versions, read *varita*, *thou raisedst*; which is undoubtedly the true Reading. The Transcribers have since their Time lengthened

ened the *jed* into a *vau*.—The Mention of a *Houfe* in the Line above, and of the *Foundation* in this, fhews that the laft Word in this Line fhould be read *zav*, a *Rock*, and not *zover*, a *Nack*. The Learned F. Houbigant has made the fame Remark.

Ibid. Lin. 3.) I don't remember that *matim*, *Staves*, ever fignifies Weapons of War. And one of the Commentators is fo fenfible it does not, that he tells us, the Arms of the *Canaanites* were called fo by way of Contempt. The *Seventy* read this Word in the Singular, which feems to be the true Reading. If then we do the fame, affixing to it *Caph* inftead of *Vau*, (which two Letters have frequently been miftaken for each other;) and if in the next place, with the *Seventy* and F. Houbigant, we add *Tau* to the laft Word of this Line, reading it *parazot*; the Senfe will be clear and proper, which at prefent is confufed and unintelligible.—The Perfons who are faid in this Period to be wounded and pierced through, were fome of the Kings of *Canaan*; but which of them are meant, the Hiftory in *Yofhua* is not particular enough to inform us.

Per. 19. Lin. 1. *They came out as a Whirlwind*) When the Kings of *Canaan* had recovered their Spirits, they entered into a Confederacy againft the *Ifraelites*; and fet upon them in Battle with fuch Fury, as if they would have fwept them away, like a ftormy Wind. Our *Whirlwind* gives us but a faint Idea of the *ruš separab*, *feorching Wind* of the Eaft, which was frequently employed as an Inftrument of divine Vengeance, and brought with it certain Deftitution. See Job xxvii. 21. Jer. xxiii. 19. and xxx. 23.

This Verb is ufed in Pfalm lviii. 10. and by attending to the Meaning and Force of it here, we may poffibly recover the true Reading of a Word in that period, which is manifefly corrupted. The corrupt Reading is *וַי*; but what the true is, no one has yet been able to fay. That a Comparison was intended, plainly appears from the Particle preceeding it. But if fo, what Comparison can fuit the Force of the Verb and Senfe of the Place, fo well as *וַי*? which in this Connection may properly be tranflated a ftormy Wind. And then the Senfe of the Period, [which in the old Verſion is expreffed thus, *Or ever your Pots be made hot with Thorns; fo let Indignation vex him, even as a thing that is raw*: And in the new thus, *Before your Pots can feel the Thorns, he fhall take them away as with a Whirlwind, both living, and in his Wrath*] will be as follows;

Before the Bramble can heat your Pots,
God's Wrath, like a ftormy Wind, fhall fweep him away.

Isaiah has the ſame Comparison, Chap. lxiv. 6. *Our Iniquities*, (that is, God's Wrath inflicted upon us for our Iniquities) *like the Wind, have taken us away*. If it fhould be asked, how *ruš* came to be changed into *zai*. I anfwer, it may not be poffible to fay exactly, how it happened; but probably in this Manner. The firft Letter might not be legible, and the other two not making a Hebrew Word, the Tranſcriber might ſubſtitute *וַי* in their Stead. This, I apprehend, has happened in other Inſtances. For how elfe ſhould *jadi*, *my Hand*, or as our Tranſlators render it, *my Serv*, have been ſubſtituted in Pf. lxxvii. 2. for *yoni*, *mine Eye*. To be convinced that *yoni* is the true Reading in this Period, we need only compare it with a parallel Place in *Lament*. iii. 49. and with the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe. Or perhaps it may be fufficient to read the following Tranſlation.

In the Day of my Diſtreſs I fought the Lord;
In the Night mine Eye trickled down without ceafing,
And my Soul refuſed to be comforted.

Ibid. To ſcatter us) In this and the 9th Period the Prophet ſpeaks in the Perſon of an *Ifraelite* who lived in the Days of *Yofhua*. In the laſt Period we ſhall find him ſpeaking in the Perſon of a captive *Jew* at *Babylon*. The former he does, to give Life to his Poetry; the latter, to give Confidence to the *Jewiſh* People.—To *ſcatter* is more properly uſed of a Number, than of a ſingle Perſon. I therefore conclude that the *jed* at the End of this Verb was originally *Vau*. All the Difference between theſe two Letters, is only this; the former is a little ſhorter than the latter. No wonder then that they have frequently been miftaken for each other.

Per. 20. *Thou marchedst with thine Horses to the western Sea, &c.*) *Yam* is frequently put by Way of Eminence for the *Western* or *Mediterranean* Sea. Now as the *Israelites* entered the Land of Promise on the *East*, it is more probably the Meaning of the Prophet, that *JEHOVAH* marched before them to give them Possession of the whole Land, even to the *West*; than that, after so many Incidents mentioned by him since their Passage thro' the *Red Sea*, he should return to speak of that again. But let every one judge for himself.

Per. 21. Lin. 1. *My Bowels were troubled*) Hebr. *My Belly trembled*.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *A wasting*) *Rotteneßs*, I think, expresses the Original in this Place too strongly. *Wasting* indeed is not a good Word, but it is the best I could think of. The Latin Word *Tabet* expresses it better.

Per. 21. Lin. 4. *And my Steps tottered under me*) The *Seventy* render this Passage *Kai vnaulobon mu sinag xbn n tñc mu*, Alex. *H xñc mu*, (probably it should be *xñc mu*.) Hence it appears, that in their Copy they found a Nominative Case to the Verb with a Pronoun affixed to it, and that they read the Verb in the third Person. But in the *Masoretical* Copy the Nominative Case is stripped of its Affix, and made to begin the next Period, where all the Commentators are puzzled what to make of it; and the third Person of the Verb is changed into the first. If we only apply the Metre to this Passage, the Blunders will be immediately detected, the right Readings restored, and the Hebrew Verse will run thus, *vetañtai tirgax afurai*. For the Construction, let the Reader compare this Verse with Ps. xxxvii. 31.

When the true Metre should be discovered, it was reasonable to expect that it would rectify such Embarrassments, as arose from a wrong Division of the Period. Bishop *Hare's* Metre does this in numberless Places: therefore we may presume, that it is the true Metre.

Per. 22. Lin. 1. *Oh that I may be at Rest*) This Verb is used of resting in the Region of the Dead; and it is probably in this Sense that the Prophet uses it here. A good Man would rather wish to be gathered to his Fathers in Peace, than survive such a Desolation of his Country, as is described in the next Period.

Per. 23. *For then the Fig-tree shall not flourish, &c.*) During this Desolation it was, that their Land rested from Tillage, and enjoyed its Sabbatical Years; which before, it seems, it had not been suffered to do, through the Avarice and Wickedness of the *Jews*. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21.

Per. 24. *Nevertheless*) Or, *But for my Part*.

Per. 25. Lin. 3. *He will cause me to tread again on my own High-Places*) By High-Places the Prophet seems to mean the fruitful Hills of *Judea*. At least, *Moses* uses the Word in this Sense, Deut. xxxii. 13. See likewise 2 Sam. I. 19. Some are of Opinion, that *Habakkuk* speaks only of the strong Holds of the land. But if we reflect on the naked and defenceless State *Judea* was in, when the *Jews* returned from Captivity, we may rather be induced to think that the Prophet meant no more than this, That after the Land had rested seventy Years and enjoyed its Sabbaths, it should become fruitful again; and that then the *Jews* should once more delight themselves in the Plenty of its pleasant Hills, as the Hind did on her favourite High-Places.

As *Habakkuk* seems to have had the Beginning of *Moses'* Blessing in his Eye at Period 3; so in this, he alludes to the Conclusion of it.

Happy art thou, O Israel! What Nation
Is like unto thee, O People saved by JEHOVAH,
Who is thy Shield to protect thee,
And thy Sword to advance thee!
Thine Enemies shall cringe and submit to thee,
And thou shalt tread upon their High-Places.

To the chief Musician on his stringed Instruments) It appears from these Words, that this Prayer was sung in the Temple-Service. The *Vau* at the end of the last of these Words has been changed into *jod* since the Greek Version was made. As *Sbigionoth* and *Selah* do not belong to the Sense, which is compleat without them; I have omitted them, as being only an Encumbrance to an English Translation.

(19)

A
NEW VERSION
OF THE
NINETIETH PSALM.

A PRAYER OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD.

- 1 **O** LORD, thou hast been our Refuge
Throughout all Generations.
- 2 Before the Mountains were brought forth,
Or the Earth and the World were formed,
Thou art from Everlasting, and to Everlasting.
- 3 Turn not frail Man to Destruction;
And say not, Return to Dust, ye Children of Men.
- 4 For a thousand Years in thy Sight,
Are but as Yesterday when it is past;
Or as a Watch of the Night.

COMMENTARY.

Moses having seen many of that Generation perish, which God had doomed to die in the Wilderness for their Disobedience, offers up a Prayer for the rest; that God would be pleased to reverse his Sentence, and receive them into Favour.

The meek Man addresses himself to JEHOVAH (Per. 1.) as the perpetual Refuge of the *Israelites*, and (Per. 2.) as the everlasting God: intercedes (Per. 3.) in their Behalf, and begs of JEHOVAH, not to shorten their Lives: And (Per. 4.) enforces his Intercession with this Plea, that a thousand Years in his sight were but an inconsiderable Number; much more, the few remaining Years of this Generation, supposing he should reverse his Sentence, and suffer them to live to the usual Period of human Life.

Moses, in the next place, endeavours to move God to Compassion, by laying before him the deplorable State his People were in, while under the Sentence of his Displeasure.

- 5 Thou waterest them with *the Dew of Sleep*,
And in the Morning they are as the Grass which springeth up.
- 6 In the Morning it springeth up, and flourisheth;
But before the Evening it is cut down, and withereth:
- 7 So are we consumed by thine Anger,
And carried off by thy Wrath.
- 8 Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee,
And our secret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance.
- 9 For all our Days are passed away
Through thy Displeasure, and our Years
Come to an End like a Tale that is told.
- 10 The Number of our Years are threescore and ten;
Or if we be very strong, fourscore Years.
- 11 And the best of them is but Labour and Sorrow;
For they soon pass away, and we are gone.
- 12 Yet who regardeth the Vehemence of thine Anger,
And that, according to thy Fear, so is thy Displeasure?
- 13 Oh teach us to number our Days,
That we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom.
- 14 At length, O JEHOVAH, return unto us,
And be reconciled to thy Servants.

COMMENTARY.

They grew up indeed, and advanced in Years; but it was only (Per. 5, 6, and 7) like the Grass, to be cut down at an immature Age. They lived (Per. 8.) under manifest Tokens of God's Displeasure: Saw (Per. 9.) their Brethren around them suddenly snatched away: Had lost all hopes of seeing the promised Land, or of reaching (Per. 10.) to the Age of their Fathers: And the only Prospect before them (Per. 11.) was, after a fruitless Wandering from Station to Station, to die sooner or later in the Wilderness; but how soon they knew not. Nay, what was still worse, they were perishing for their Sins; and yet no one (Per. 12.) sufficiently laid it to Heart.

Having thus represented to JEHOVAH the deplorable State of this Generation, and especially their Insensibility under his Judgments; the tender-hearted Prophet prays earnestly, (Per. 13.) That God would teach them by his Spirit, what he could not by his Judgments, namely, the Wisdom of fearing him: That on Condition of their Repentance, he would also (Per. 14.) repent of the Evil which

THE NINETIETH PSALM

21

- 15 Satisfy us early with thy Mercy,
That we may sing and rejoice all our Days.
- 16 Gladden us according to the Days thou hast afflicted us,
And according to the Years we have suffered Adversity.
- 17 Let thy Work be seen by thy Servants,
And thy Glory by their Children.
- 18 Let the Countenance of JEHOVAH
Our God smile upon us;
And prosper thou the Work of our Hands.

COMMENTARY.

which he purposed to do unto them, and receive them into Favour: That (Per. 15. and 16.) after a long Night of Affliction, he would refresh them with his Mercy, and cheer them with his gracious Presence: That (Per. 17.) what he did, he would do soon; in order to make the Fathers, as well as Children, partakers of it: Lastly, that (Per. 18.) he would mercifully lift up the Light of his Countenance upon them, conduct them to the promised Land, and prosper their Arms in taking Possession of it.

NOTES

O-N

to Gladstone

Some learned Men indeed argue, from the 10th Verse, that this Prayer could not be composed by *Moses*; because in his Days, the Period of human Life was not so short, as seventy or eighty Years. But this Argument proceeds upon a mistake; for the Prophet is not speaking there of the stated Period of human Life, but of the shortened Period of that Generation, who were untimely cut off for their Sins: and therefore we may still ascribe this Prayer to *Moses*, as the Hebrew and all the ancient Versions do; and indeed, as the Turn of the Composition directs us to do.

The eternal God is thy Refuge,
And his everlasting Arms thy Support.

The Transposition of Letters has been a fruitful Source of Obscurity in the Hebrew Scriptures. The learned Dr. *R. Grey*, and after him *F. Houbigant*, have recovered the Sense of Prov. xxvii. 21. by taking } away from one Word, and prefixing it to the Word foregoing; in which they are justified by the Structure of the Sentence, and the Version of the *Septuagint*.

Here ⁵ has evidently been misplaced. I would refer it to the Consideration of the Learned, whether the same Letter has not been misplaced in the very same Manner Prov. xvi. 4. At least this is certain, that if we take ⁵ away from the Word it is prefixed to at present, and prefix it to the Word foregoing, the Harshness of this Text will vanish; and a Sense arise from the Words, which will be worthy of the Wife man, agreeable to the Perfections of God, and suitable to the Design and Tenor of Revelation:

Per.

Per. 4. *For a thousand Years in thy Sight &c.*) Another Psalmist makes Use of the same Plea with God not to shorten his Life. Ps. cii. 20.

I said unto him, Take me not off,

O Lord, in the midst of my days;

Thy Years endure throughout all Generations.

Such was the Plea which *Moses* used with God, not to cut off the *Israelites* in the midst of their Days; and a very natural one it was. But how this same Plea could be urged as a Reason for cutting them off, as the *Masoretical* Division of the two foregoing Periods makes it, is what I could never yet comprehend.

Per. 4. Lin. 3. *Or as a Watch of the Night*) A thousand Years to come are in the Sight of God no more, than a Day when past; or, what is still less, than a Watch or fourth Part of a Night when past.

Per. 5. Lin. 1. *Thou waterest them with the Dew of Sleep*) There cannot be a stronger Proof of a Version's being just, than that it preserves the Integrity of the Metaphor; which this of the ingenious *Le Clerc* does. He was happy in translating into a Language, which furnished him with a Phrase to express it, as the Latin Tongue does, namely, *persundere vel irrigare somno*. Our Language not having such a Phrase, I was obliged, in order to convey the Metaphor, to add in Italicks, *the Dew of*.

Per. 6. Lin. 1. *In the Morning it springeth up, and flourisheth*) In the Original the two Verbs of this Line are plainly transposed. For who does not know, that the Grass must first spring up before it can flourish. In the next place, *vašalep* should be *jašlep* in the future; and then it will be an elegant Repetition of *jašlep* in the Period foregoing; and the two Verbs in the former part of this Period, will exactly correspond to the two in the latter. Let the Reader for his Satisfaction compare this Verse thus restored, *babboker jašlep vejazix*, with the foregoing and following.

Misplacing a Word generally mars the Elegance of a sacred Writer, and sometimes perverts the sense. In Psalm LXXVIII. 19. the sense is perverted: If we reduce the last Word in the 18th Period to its true Place in the Beginning of the 19th,

yalita bakkodes lammarom.

Thou art gone up into thy Sanctuary on high.

the Sense will return with it; agreeably to the 24th Period, and to Psalm LXXVIII. 69.

He built his Sanctuary on high.

— In Psalm LXXIV. 2. The Elegance of the Period is in my Judgment marred. If we place the Word, which now ends the 2d Line, at the Beginning of it, *našlateca gaalta šebel*, the Elegance of it will be restored.

Remember thy Congregation, which thou hast purchased of old;

Thine Inheritance, which thou hast redeemed by thy Scepter;

And this Mount Sion, in which thou hast dwelt.

There is indeed an Instance, in which *šebel* precedes *našlab*: but this, I think, is no Objection to the Order, in which I have here placed the Words. Let the Reader compare it with Ps. LXXVII. 15. for the Sense, and then judge for himself.

Per. 6. Lin. 2. *Before the Evening*) As the preposition prefixed to the Word Evening is different from that prefixed to the Word Morning, *Moses* must have meant something different by it. The Sense directs us to render it *before*; for the Season of mowing and withering is before the Evening. It is used in the same Sense in the Prayer of *Habakkuk*. Per. 22.

Per. 7. Lin. 1. *So*) Bp *Hare*, not knowing what to make of the Causal *ci* in this Place, removed it to the next Period. But had this learned Man observed, that the Comparison used by *Moses*, requires this Period to compleat it, he would, probably, have only changed it into *can*, for which it has frequently been mistaken. See Psalm LXXIII. 22. where our Translators acknowledge the Mistake. — *David* speaking of the wicked, uses the same Comparison, Psalm XXXVII. 2.

They shall soon be cut down like the Grass,

And wither like the green Herb.

No Writers carry on the *Simile* or *Metaphor* with more Exactness than the sacred: And neither Critic nor Translator can have a better Rule to discover the right Reading or true Sense, than to pursue them with Exactness.

Per. 9. *Thou hast set our Iniquities before thee, &c.*) The Cloud of Glory is frequently called in Scripture the Face or Countenance of JEHOVAH. And when God remembers and punishes Sin, he is represented as placing it before his Countenance; when he forgets and forgives it, he is represented as hiding or turning away his Countenance from it. See Psal. LI. 11.

Per. 10. Lin. 2. *Or if they be very strong, fourscore Years*) If the Writer of this Psalm be speaking of the common Period of human Life at the Time he composed it, why does he complain in the foregoing Verse, that the People were untimely cut off through God's Displeasure? If they lived to the utmost Term of human Life, what Reason for Complaint? Hence I conclude that the ordinary Period of Life when this Psalm was wrote, was more than fourscore Years; and that no Argument can be drawn from this Verse, that it was not composed by him whose Name it bears, in whose Time the Age of Man was probably a hundred and twenty Years.

Per. 11. *And the best of them is but Labour and Sorrow &c.*) Another sacred Poet, speaking of this Generation, expresses himself thus on this Occasion, Psal. LXXVIII. 33.

He consumed their Days in Vanity,
And their Years in Trouble.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *We are gone*) Hebr. *We are flown*.

Per. 12. *Yet who regardeth the Vehemence of thine Anger &c.*) In this Period, *Moses* laments the Insensibility of the *Israelites* under the Judgments of God. They saw his Wrath sweeping Numbers away for their Sins; and yet none studied to divert it, by fearing him as they ought. God's Displeasure against those who disregard him, is great in proportion to the Reverence due to him; and the more he is disregarded, the more severely he punishes. This the *Israelites* would not attend to; and this it was, that drew from *Moses* the following Petition, that God would teach them the Wisdom of reverencing his divine Majesty.

Per. 14. Lin. 1. *At length, O JEHOVAH, return unto us*) Hebr. *Return, O JEHOVAH, how long?* The Phrase *how long* is elliptical, and ought to be supplied with, *wilt thou absent thyself from us?* The Words which I have supplied, amount to the same Thing, and avoid a Parenthesis.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *And be reconciled to thy Servants*) Hebr. *And repent concerning thy Servants*. This is sometimes expressed more fully thus, *Repent of the Evil which thou purposedst to do unto thy Servants*; which is in other Words, *to be reconciled to them*, as I have expressed it.

Per. 17. Lin. 1. and 2. *Let the Countenance of JEHOVAH our God smile upon us*) In these Words I have expressed the Original, as well as I was able. God at present beheld them with an angry Countenance: and *Moses* begs, that he would look upon them with a pleased Countenance. For *nyam* in this Connection must mean Sweetness, or rather Graciousness of Countenance. What were the Signals of Favour or Displeasure from the Cloud of Glory, we know not: but we may be certain, there were such. By the next Words it appears, that the particular Favour here requested, was, that JEHOVAH would conduct them to the Land of *Canaan*, and prosper their Arms in taking Possession of it. Another Psalmist devoutly acknowledges, that they owed the Possession of this Land to the Cloud of Glory, Ps. XLIV. 2.

For they gat not Possession of the Land by their own Sword,
Nor was it their own Arm, which saved them;
But thy right Hand, and thine Arm,
And the LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE; because thou favouredst them.

The *Masoretical* Copy adds at the End of this Period, *Upon us, and prosper thou the Work of our Hands*. But these Words, as *Bp Hare*, and after him *F. Houbigant* have observed, are nothing more than a blundering Repetition of the Words foregoing; which neither the Copy of the *Septuagint* acknowledges, nor the Metre and Elegance of the Composition admit of.

A
NEW VERSION
OF THE
CXXXIX PSALM.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 **T**HOU searchest me out, O JEHOVAH, and knowest me;
Thou knowest, when I sit down, and when I rise up;
Thou understandest my Thoughts long before *they are conceived*.
- 2 Thou surroundest my Path, and my Bed;
And art acquainted with all my Ways.
- 3 Before my Speech is upon my Tongue,
Behold, O JEHOVAH, thou knowest the whole of it.
- 4 Thy Knowledge is too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot comprehend it.
- 5 Thou hemmest me in, behind and before;
And layest thine Hand upon me.

COMMENTARY.

In this Psalm *David* celebrates JEHOVAH on account of his Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence; adores him for the wonderful Formation of his Body; and implores his Guidance and Direction.

He addresses JEHOVAH (Per. 1, 2, & 3.) as *omniscient*, as the Searcher of his Heart and Observer of his Thoughts; as perfectly acquainted with all his Actions, Projects and Designs; as knowing what his Thoughts would be, even before they were conceived in his Mind; and what his Speech, before it was uttered by his Tongue: And then confesseth (Per. 4.) that such Knowledge is too sublime for him, rather to be adored than comprehended by him.

He acknowledgeth (Per. 6.) God's *Omnipresence* and *Omnipotence*, declaring it impossible to retire from his Presence, or retreat from his Power: for that let him

- 6 Whither can I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither can I fly from thy Presence?
- 7 If I should ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there;
Or if I should go down to Hell, behold, Thou art there.
- 8 If I should take my Flight to the East;
Or settle in the remotest part of the West;
- 9 Even there would thy Hand lead me,
And thy right Hand keep fast hold of me.
- 10 Or should I say, Doubtless the Darkness will hide me,
And the Night spread its Blackness around me:
- 11 Even Darkness would not hide me from thee,
And the Night would shine bright as the Day:
Darkness and Light are both alike to thee.
- 12 For thou hast fashioned my Reins,
Thou hast covered me in my Mother's Womb.
- 13 I will praise thee, O God; for I am awfully
Made: wonderful are thy Works,
And this my Soul knoweth right well.
- 14 My Substance was not concealed from thee,
While I was formed in the secret Place,
And curiously wrought in the lower Parts of the Earth.
- 15 Thine Eyes did see my shapeless Mass,
And in thy Book were all my Members
Registered, on the Day they were formed,
And not one of them was omitted.

COMMENTARY.

go forward or backward (Per. 5.) upward or downward (Per. 7.) to the right Hand or left (Per. 8.) he was still unable (Per. 9.) to get from under his Hand and Controul. Or in case he fled to Darkness for Refuge, even Darkness could not screen him from JEHOVAH; because he that made the Heart and Reins, would in every Place be able to search them. (Per. 10, 11, and 12.)

From the Mention of God's creating his Reins, *David* takes Occasion to praise him for the wonderful Formation of his Body; for the exquisite Skill with which he had fashioned, and the exact Care with which he had superintended it, during the Formation. (Per. 13, 14, and 15.)

- 16 How precious unto me, O God, are the Thoughts of thee!
How numerous are the Occasions of them!
- 17 Should I count them, they would be more than the Sand:
Whenever I awake, I am constantly thinking of thee.
- 18 Doubtless, O God, thou wilt slay the wicked.
Let those impious Men depart from me,
- 19 Who mention thee only for Mischief,
And think of thee only for Deceit.
- 20 Should not I hate them, O JEHOVAH, that hate thee?
And should I not abhor them, that rise up against thee?
- 21 I do indeed hate them with a perfect Hatred,
And look upon them as mine enemies.
- 22 Search me, O God, and discover my Heart;
Sift me, and discover my Thoughts.
- 23 Look well, if there be any Way of Wickedness in me;
And lead me in the Way everlasting.

COMMENTARY.

Having finished his Meditation on the Perfections of God, the Psalmist first declares (Per. 16.) in regard to himself, how much he delighted in such Thoughts; and (Per. 17.) how carefully he improved the numerous Occasions, which suggested them. Afterwards he expresseth (Per. 18.) his Abhorrence of those Men, who never seriously considered these Perfections, and only mentioned his Name (Per. 19.) to carry on their wicked Designs more successfully: And then appeals (Per. 20.) with great Zeal and Affection to God, whether he did not do right in reputing such Men for his own Enemies, whilst they continued to be his. Lastly, he concludes the Hymn, with begging of God to examine his Heart, (Per. 22.) and try his Sincerity; and, if he found him (Per. last) walking in a wicked Way, to take him out of it, and lead him into the Way of his Commandments.

NOTES

ON THE

CXXXIX PSALM.

A Psalm of David.) In the Hebrew and all the ancient Versions, this Psalm bears the Name of *David*, as the Author of it; and indeed the Composition is so excellent, as to be every Way worthy of the sweet Psalmist of *Israel*. However, some learned Men dispute his Title to it; and, because two or three *Chaldee* Words are found in it, determine it to have been wrote *after* the *Babylonish* Captivity. But before this Argument can be allowed to be conclusive, these two Points ought to be decided. First, that no *Chaldee* Words are to be met with in those Scriptures, which were confessedly wrote *before* the Captivity. And secondly, that the few Words in Question are not *Hebrew* as well as *Chaldee*. The first, I think, they will never go about to decide. And the scanty Remains of the *Hebrew* Language will perhaps put it out of their Power to decide the second. As to the additional Title, *Of Zachariah in the Captivity*, which is found in some Copies of the *Seventy*, it seems to have been subjoined to the *Hebrew* Title by a private Hand, from a Tradition probably, that this Psalm was on some Occasion used by *Zachariah* during the Captivity. But which ever Way the learned determine this, whether it was wrote by *David*, or by some later inspired Penman, the Sense of the Psalm is not, in my Opinion, affected by it: Since it only contains a devout Meditation on the Perfections of God, and a zealous Declaration of Dislike to those, who thought dishonourably of Him, and used his Name and Religion with no other Design, than to carry on their Wickedness more successfully.

Per. 1. Lin. 3. *Long before*) The Word in the Original is used of Distance of Place, as well as of Time. If Distance of Place be meant here, then it must be rendered *from afar*, to this Sense; Though thou, O Lord, be in Heaven most high, yet from that immense Distance thou observest my inmost Thoughts and Designs. In this Sense the Word is used Psal. cxxxviii. 6.

Though JEHOVAH be high, yet he looketh down upon the lowly;
Though he be exalted, yet he regardeth *him* from afar.

But if the Psalmist means to express the same Thing with regard to our Thoughts, as he does Per. 3^d, with regard to our Words, then Distance of Time must be understood here, as I have translated it.

Per. 3. Lin. 1. *Before my Speech is upon my Tongue*) Or, *When the Speech is not yet upon my Tongue*.

Per. 4. and 5.) I have changed the Order of these two Periods. And if the Reader will observe, how naturally the 4th Period closes what the Psalmist had been speaking of, the Omniscience of God; and how properly the 5th Period begins what he is going to say of his Omnipotence and Omnipresence; and at the same time will take Notice of the strict Connection there is between the 5th and four following Periods, he may possibly think that in our present *Hebrew* Copy these two Periods are transposed. — It is no uncommon Thing for Transcribers to transpose a Period or a Line; and the Want of Connection, which is frequently observable in the poetical Scriptures, is undoubtedly owing sometimes to this. I will lay before the Learned an Instance of each, to which, I am persuaded, they cannot deny their Assent. In Psalm xxxiv. the Connection of four Periods is broken by a Transposition of the 16th Period. After restoring this to its proper Place, let the Reader peruse the Passage, and judge for himself.

Depart from EVIL, and do Good;
Seek Peace, and pursue it:

For the Face of JEHOVAH is against them that do EVIL,
To cut off the Remembrance of them from the Earth.

But

But the Eyes of JEHOVAH are upon the Righteous,
And his Ears are open to their CRY:

They CRY, and JEHOVAH heareth them;
And delivereth them out of all their Distresses.

If it be said, that this is an *alphabetical* Psalm; and therefore the Period cannot be transposed, because it comes in the natural Order of the Alphabet, which Order is invariable. I answer, that with regard to the Letters in Question, *Gnain* and *Ps*, this Order is not invariable; and refer the Reader for Satisfaction to the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*; where, in three *alphabetical* Chapters out of four, he will find *Ps* precede *Gnain*. And therefore the Hebrew Poets had a Licence of placing either of the two Letters first, as they pleased. If so, the Connection indisputably shews, that *Ps* was placed by David before *Gnain*; which is the Order in which I have replaced it. — And as the Transposition of a Period sometimes breaks the Connection, at others the misplacing a Line does the same. In Chap. VII. of the *Song of Solomon*, a Line which belongs to the beginning of the 4th Period, is transposed to the end of the 5th; where all the Commentators are puzzled (as well they may be) what to make of it. If we restore the Line to its proper Place, all the Perplexity will vanish, and the Sense be explained by comparing it with Chap. IV. 4.

Thy Neck is like the Ivory Tower
Of the King surrounded with Galleries.

If any one will be at the Trouble to reduce the 4th and 5th Periods to Metre, he will need no Arguments to persuade him that the last Verse is misplaced; nor any after this, I should think, to convince him, that Bp. Hare's Metre, which points out the Transposition intuitively, is the true Metre. At least, Discoveries of this kind, which are solely owing to the Metre, will counterbalance all Prejudice raised against it, and dispose Men to give the Arguments in favour of it a fair Hearing. And if these be fairly attended to, they must in the End prevail. For my part, I can as easily conceive that a Key should open a thousand Locks which it was never made for, as that any Metre should clear the numberless Passages which Bp. Hare's does, and yet not be the true Metre.

Per. 6. *Whither can I go — Or whither can I fly* —) This Period consisting of two Queries, I shall make upon them the two following Remarks — That the first Query, *Whither can I GO*, is carried on in the 8th Period, *If I should GO up to Heaven, or GO down to Hell*. — And that the second Query, *Whither can I FLY*, is carried on in the 9th, *If I should FLY to the East, or SETTLE in the West*. From the first of these Remarks I infer, that the true Reading of the second Verb in the 7th Period is not *Should I make my Bed*; but, as F. Houbigant has acutely observed, *Should I go down*, which is agreeable to all the ancient Versions. From the second, I infer, that *nasa canpim* in the 8th Period, is to *take Wing or Flight*.

Per. 7. Lin. 2. *Or if I should go down to Hell*) The Opposition between the two Parts of this Period necessarily require, that *seol* should be rendered *Hell*. And it would be as improper to translate it *Grave* in this Place, as to render *adai* by *Grave* in *Matth. xi. 23*.

Per. 8.) If we compare the Structure of this Period with that of the foregoing, and with the Version of the *Seventy*, we may observe that *im* has been dropped before the first Verse, and a *vau* before the second. In the next place, if we compare the first Verse with the Greek Version, and a similar Place in *Job xxxix. 26*.

Is it by thy Wisdom that the Hawk flieth?
Or that She directeth her Flight to the South?

it will appear, that the Preposition *l* has been dropped before *sakar*, and that the Word before this has been pointed wrong by the *Masorets*. With these Emendations the Period will run thus:

im essa canpai lesakar.
v'esenab beakarit jam.

Ibid

Ibid. Lin. 1. *To the East*) *jašar* signifies *the Morning*, but is here by a *Metonymy* put for *the East*; in the same Manner as *jam*, which signifies *the Sea*, is in the other Part of the Period put for *the West*. The former is put for *the East*, because the Morning first appears in the East. The latter is put for *the West*, because the *Mediterranean Sea*, which was eminently called by the Jews *the Sea*, lay on the West of *Judea*.

Per. 10. Lin. 1. *ješupeni*) This Verb occurs but in three Places more; in the two first of which it is rendered to *bruise*, and in the last to *break*; and indeed the *Sepent* translate it to the same Sense in this. The Learned observing, that neither of these Senses suited this Place, nor indeed any other Sense but that of *Hiding*, have borrowed this Sense for it from another Word. But how much better would it be, to receive the right Reading, which has no other Sense; than to retain the wrong, and borrow this Sense for it? This I make no Doubt will be granted me: And persuade myself it will be as readily granted, that *jaššiceni* is the right Reading, after it has been observed, that the Psalmist uses this very Verb in the next Period to retract the Assertion, which he had advanced in this. For what is more common, than to use the same Verb in advancing an Assertion, which is used in retracting it?

Ibid. Lin. 2. *or*) If this Reading be true, the Psalmist retracts in the second Part of this Period the Assertion which he advanced in the first. But this cannot be: because *gam, even*, which begins the next Period, plainly shews that he did not intend to retract what he had advanced in this Period, until the next: just as this same Particle which begins the 10th Period, shews that he did not intend to answer either of the Queries proposed in the 9th, until the 10th Period; *or* therefore cannot be the true Reading. The *Chaldee* Paraphrast had a different Word in his Copy, which he renders by *dark* or *black*. And that this is the Sense, which the Place requires, may be seen, by setting each of the Assertions retracted in Opposition to those which are advanced.

Assertion.	{	<i>advanced</i> , Doubtless the Darkness will hide me:
		<i>retracted</i> , Even Darkness will not hide me from thee.
		<i>advanced</i> , Doubtless the Night shall be black around me:
		<i>retracted</i> , Even the Night would shine bright as the Day.

The next Enquiry is, what the *Hebrew* Word was, which the *Chaldee* Paraphrast had in his Copy. F. Heubigant thinks it was *ay*: but it was more probably *ayin*, *Blackness*; first, because this Word is to be found with *lailah* in *Prov.* VII. 9. and XX. 20; and secondly, because the Remains of it are to be found in the Word *ayin*, and in the Word following. The *Aleph* is the same in both, the *Jed* has been lengthened into a *Vau*, the *Shin* has been changed into *Resh*, the second *Vau* has been dropped, and the *Nun* has got into the next Word, which should be read, not *boyadani* but *boyadi*, as it is elsewhere.

Per. 12. Lin. 2. *Thou hast covered me in my Mother's Womb*) The Infant in the Womb is wrapped in two Membranes. These (as Bp. Patrick and *Le Clerc* observe) are probably the *Covering* of which the Psalmist speaks.

Per. 13. Lin. 1. *pal ci*) The two following Emendations of F. Heubigant will, I conceive, approve themselves to the Learned as soon as mentioned. *pal ci* no where occur together as a *Hebrew* Particle; *pal* therefore can have no Place here. Instead of *pal*, the ingenious Father reads *el, O God*, which is as necessary here, where the Psalmist offers up his Praises to God, as in the 16th Period, where he appeals to God for the Delight he took in meditating on his Perfections. See likewise Per. 22. — In the next Place, for *niphti*, which has not the Sense of *forming* required in this Place, the learned Father, agreeably to the *Arab.* and *Syr.* Versions, reads *nippalti* which has this Sense. — The two Words were originally wrote thus *נִפְּלִי נִפְּלִי*: but the former Word having been wrote in the Line above exactly over the latter, the *Aleph* by some Accident got into the Word below; and the *Gnain* into the Word above; and the two Words became *נִפְּלִי נִפְּלִי*, as they are now wrote in two MSS. mentioned by F. Heubigant. After this, the *Aleph* was changed into a *Jed*, and hence the present corrupt Readings.

Per.

Per. 14. Lin. 1. *My substance*) The Word rendered *my substance*, may more properly be rendered *my Bone*, or in the plural, as *Aquila* renders it, *my Bones*. Hence I suspect that it has changed Place with the first Word of the next Period, namely, with *golmi*, *my shapeless Mass*. The Reasons which induce me to think that *golmi*, *my shapeless Mass*, originally belonged to this Period, are, first, because it was natural for the Psalmist to speak of the Embryo before he spoke of the Bones; and secondly, because, the Word in its primary Sense signifying a *Clew*, of Silk or Worsted for instance, the Metaphor is justly carried on in the Verb *curiously wrought*, or *embroidered*, which follows in this Period. In the next place, *pazmai*, *my Bones*, must, I think, have originally belonged to the next Period; first, because there are four Plurals, which require a plural Noun to agree with them; and secondly, because there is no making Sense of the Period without supplying *my Members*, which would be unnecessary if *pazmai* belonged to it.

Ibid. Lin. 2. & 3. *While I was formed in the secret Place — in the lower Parts of the Earth*) The *lower Parts of the Earth*, which signify the Sepulchre, are here made equivalent to the *secret Place*, or the Womb; because the Womb is considered as a kind of living Sepulchre to the Infant before it comes into the World. Hence, when Christ is said, Eph. IV. 9. to descend into the *lower Parts of the Earth*, this may mean the first Step of his Humiliation, namely, his Incarnation in the Womb, as well as the last, namely, his Descent into the Sepulchre; or rather it may include both, and so be intended to express the whole of his Humiliation; the two principal Parts of a Thing being frequently put for the whole. On the other hand, the Sepulchre from which Christ was raised, is considered as a kind of Womb from which he was born, when he is called *The FIRSTBORN from the Dead*. And hence arises the Propriety of the prophetick Language, *Thou art my SON, this Day have I BEGOTTEN thee*; which is said, Acts XIII. 33. to be fulfilled in Christ, when he was raised from the Sepulchre.

Per. 15. Lin. 4. *And not one of them was omitted*) that is, to be registered. The Verb in the Original has been dropped. What it was, I can no ways conjecture; but have supplied *omitted*, which the Sense seems to require, and which, I find, was supplied by Dr. Hammond before me.

Per. 16.) This Period in the Original begins with *ali*, and *unto me*. But who does not see, that it is as improper for the Hebrew, as for the English Period, to begin in this Manner. In other places the Particle *mah*, *how*, begins the Interrogatory Sentence; and so it should here. *Li* also ought to follow *jakeru*, as it does elsewhere; and both sense and Metre shew the *Vau* prefixed to it to be redundant. — *Li*, very probably, was omitted in transcribing, and placed in the Margin with the same Letter prefixed to it, through mistake, which ends *jakeru*: hence came *ali*. And the next Transcriber, not observing where it had been omitted, might place it at the beginning of the Period; and hence the faulty Position of this Word.

Ibid. *How precious unto me, O God, are the Thoughts of thee!*) That is, how delightful and improving are such Meditations as the foregoing, concerning thy Perfections, O God, and concerning thy wonderful Formation of me! If the Reader will compare this Period with the next, and likewise observe how plainly the latter part of the 19th Period is opposed to this, he may possibly think that I have given the right Sense of it. It is true, *David*, Ps. XL. 5. speaks of God's Thoughts, confessing that they are innumerable. But this is no Reason why he should not be speaking here of his own. Besides, the Word rendered *Thoughts* in that place is different, and it is expressly added there, *towards us*.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *How numerous are the Occasions of them!*) The Psalmist's Meditations upon God were as numerous, as the Mercies and Providences which gave Occasion to them; or rather, like these, they were innumerable. — *Le Clerc* confesses, that he does not know a single Text where *raf* in the plural signifies a Sum; which is a strong Presumption, that this is not the Meaning of it here. It seems to me in this place to signify, either in one Sense of the Word, *the Heads or Subjects* which exercised the Psalmist's Thoughts; or in another, *the Beginning, Origin, or what gave Rise and Occasion* to his Thoughts.

Thoughts. It is in one of these Senses that the Psalmist uses it, Pl. CXIX. 160; but in which, let the Reader judge.

The Origin, or Subject of thy Word is Truth;
And all thy Judgments are Righteousness for ever.

The last of these Lines I render thus; because from comparing this Period with the 142d, the true Reading of it seems to be, *ulevolam col misspataca zedek.*

Per. 17. Lin. 2. *Whenever I awake, I am constantly thinking of thee*) Hebr. *I awake, and still am with thee*, that is, in Thought and Meditation. The meaning is, I meditate on thy Mercies and Providences as constantly and regularly, as the Morning returns. — When a literal Translation will not convey the Meaning of the *Hebrew*, it is allowable to place it in the Margin, and to substitute Words that will; which is sometimes done by our own Translators.

Per 18. Lin. 2. *Let those impious Men depart from me*) Hebr. *And ye Men of Blood depart from me*. Since the Sense of the Psalmist is not completed in this Period, but carried on through the next in the *third* Person, I have in this changed the *second* Person into the *third*, as the *Chaldee* Paraphrast and *Syriac* Translator have done before me: Though I am inclined to think, the Verse originally stood thus, *ans. damim jafuru menni.*

Ibid. Impious Men) Hebr. *Men of Blood*, that is, Men, whose Blood is due to Justice for their Crimes: for so this phrase is sometimes understood. The Character given of them in the next Period, denominates them *impious* Men rather than *Murderers*. Accordingly the excellent *Mais* tells us, that the Psalmist means such as deserved Death for their *Impiety*. And the *Chaldee* Paraphrast has it, *Let the Men devoted to the Judgment of Death depart from me*. In other Places of the Psalms these Men are described, as thinking that God is altogether such a one as themselves, and as impiously crying out, How should God know? Is there knowledge in the most High? Here they are represented, as availing themselves of his Name and Religion, to carry on their mischievous Designs more successfully.

Per. 19.) No one has yet been able to make a clear and consistent Sense of this Period. The Reason is, a Letter in the last Word of it has been transposed, which has embarrassed all the Commentators. If for *עַד* we read *עַד*, (which Word has been used in this Psalm twice before (Per. 1. & 17.) the two parts of the Period will exactly correspond; *after*, which begins it, will be the Nominative Case to both the Verbs, as it was natural to expect it should be; and we shall have no Occasion to supply after the second Verb an Accusative, as all Interpreters have been obliged to do. — As *nasa campim* in the 8th Period signifies, *to take Wing*, or *to fly*, so in this, *nasa revim* signifies, *to take Thought*, or *to think*; and with the Addition of the Pronoun, *to think of thee*, as I have rendered it.

The Transposition and Change of a Letter in one Word will set right a Passage in Prov. XX. 16. & XXVII. 13. If for *בַּעַד* we read *עַד* in the Participle *Benoni*, the Sense will be easy, and the Period with this Alteration thus,

lekah bigdo ci yarab zar:
vyarab ncriah babbalehu.

Take his Garment to pledge, who is surety for a Stranger:
But take the Man himself, who is surety for a strange Woman.

“Hast thou any Concerns with a Man, who is so utterly void of Discretion, as to be Surety for a Woman, who leaves her Country to abandon herself to Lewdness; if thou wouldst be secure, trust not to any Pledge, nor be content with any Thing less than the Man's Person in thy Custody.” The Preposition *beyad* cannot be the true Reading in this Place; first, because it is no where construed with *yarab*; and secondly, if it was, it should have come before the first substantive, *zar*, and not before the Second, *ncriah*. On the other hand, if *yarab* be the true Reading, there is no Occasion for a Preposition before the second substantive, as there is none before the first.

APPENDIX.

AFTER the foregoing Sheets were sent to the Press, I met with Dr. Sykes' Paraphrase on the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; in the Introduction to which he has given an Explanation of the cxth Psalm. His Remarks upon it are very ingenious; but did not, I must own, afford me the Satisfaction I expected. This Psalm is indeed, as the Doctor observes, one of the most difficult in the whole Collection. But have not its Difficulties been increased by the injudicious method, which Commentators have taken to get clear of them; that is, by blending the *literal* Sense with the *spiritual*, which ought to have been kept distinct? For my part, I have often thought so; and am persuaded, that the Doctor would have succeeded better in his Explication, if he had not fallen into the same Mistake. This it was, that induced me to draw up (as well as the *little* Time I had, would permit) the following *Version* and *Commentary* upon it, in the *literal* Sense; and to subjoin it, as no unsuitable *Appendix*, to the other Pieces in this small Collection.

The Psalm contains a Prophecy concerning the MESSIAH. And the *literal* Sense is conveyed under one continued and consistent Image, of a mighty *Warrior*, taking Possession of a Kingdom, and going forth with his loyal Subjects to subdue all those who oppose his Government: Which Image if the Reader will keep in View, he cannot, I think, easily mistake the *literal* Meaning of this Psalm. And when this is once discovered, it may not be difficult to ascertain the *spiritual* Meaning.

A
NEW VERSION
OF THE
CX PSALM.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

- 1 **JEHOVAH** said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right Hand, till I make
Thine Enemies thy Footstool.
- 2 **JEHOVAH** shall deliver unto thee
The Scepter of thy Power out of Sion :
Rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies.
- 3 Thy People shall freely offer themselves
On the Day when thou shalt assemble thy Forces
Upon the holy Hills. The Youth of *thine Army*
Shall be like the Dew from the Womb of the Morning.
- 4 **JEHOVAH** hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou art a Priest for ever,
After the Order of Melchizedek.

COMMENTARY.

A Prophecy of *David* concerning the MESSIAH.

JEHOVAH, the Father, admits the MESSIAH, his Son, (Per. 1.) to be Partner of his Throne: presents him (Per. 2.) with the Ensign of Royal Command, and gives him Authority to rule over his Subjects. When the MESSIAH assembles his Forces (Per. 3.) to reduce those to his Obedience who will not receive him for their King, his loyal Subjects shall readily join him, and compose an Army, as numerous as the Drops of Morning Dew. **JEHOVAH** invests the MESSIAH, not only with supreme Command, but (Per. 4.) with an everlasting Priesthood; who

- 5 The Lord on thy right Hand, O **YEHOVAH**,
Shall smite Kings in the Day of his Wrath.
- 6 He shall execute Judgment amongst the Heathen;
He shall fill *the Field of Battle* with dead Bodies;
He shall smite the **HEAD** of many Countries.
- 7 He shall drink of the Brook in the Way;
Therefore shall he lift up his Head.

COMMENTARY.

who (Per. 5, and 6.) shall march forth to execute Vengeance on those Countries and Potentates, who will not have Him to reign over them, carrying Death and Destruction wheresoever he marches: and who shall afterwards, in recompence for his wearisome Expedition, (Per. last) reascend his Throne in Triumph, and reign supreme over all.

The spiritual Sense of the CX PSALM.

THIS Prophecy of *David* was fulfilled in **JESUS**, when he rose from the Dead, ascended into Heaven, and sat down on the right Hand of his Father; from thenceforth expecting till all his Enemies be made his Footstool, that is, till Satan, the Prince of this World, be confined for ever to the bottomless Pit, till all the persecuting Powers of it be destroyed, and till Death and the Grave shall be no more. Per. 1.

The Kingdom, to which he was advanced, was a Spiritual Kingdom. The Scepter, with which he was presented in the Heavenly *Sion*, was, *All Power in Heaven and on Earth*, to be employed for the Protection of his Subjects, and the Destruction of his Enemies. Per. 2.

The Laws of his Kingdom were the Laws of the Gospel, which were to be published from *Jerusalem*. They who *freely offered themselves* to publish his Laws, and gather Subjects into his Kingdom, were the Apostles and first Preachers of his Gospel; who waited at *Jerusalem*, till they were *invested with Power from on high* to execute their Commission. *The Youth of his spiritual Army*, were the first Converts to Christianity; three thousand of whom were made by St. *Peter's* first Sermon, delivered from one of the *holy Hills*. And when his Apostles and Converts went forth among the Heathen to subdue and reduce them to the *Obedience of Faith*, they spread his Gospel over the World in a few Years, and gathered into his Kingdom Multitudes of Subjects out of every Nation under Heaven. Per. 3.

At the same time that **JESUS** was seated on his Throne as King, he was made High Priest in the heavenly Sanctuary, to interceed for his People and be their Advocate with the Father. Per. 4.

The Scepter was given him, as well for the Destruction of his Enemies, as the Protection of his Subjects. When therefore the Potentates of the Earth

opposed his Gospel, and persecuted its Publishers, he destroyed them *with the Breath of his Mouth*; first, by pouring out his Wrath on *Judea*, in the Excision of its Inhabitants and the Subversion of its State: and afterwards, by executing his Vengeance on the persecuting Powers of the *Heathen* World, as they rose up to oppose the Advancement of his Kingdom. Per. 5. and 6.

When JESUS set out upon his Warfare against the Enemies of our Salvation, he drank deep of the Cup of Sorrow and Sufferings: But in reward for his Humiliation, he is highly exalted at the right Hand of God; *that all should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*. And from hence he calls out to his Followers; *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my THRONE; even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father on HIS THRONE*. Per. last.

NOTES

ON THE

CX PSALM.

PER. 1. Lin. 2. *Sit thou on my right Hand*) To *sit on the Throne*, and to *reign*, are in the Hebrew Scriptures equivalent Expressions. Hence it is, that *sit* in this Place means *reign*, because it is an elliptical Expression for *sit on the Throne*; And so it is interpreted by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews too (if he was not St. Paul) understood it thus, Ch. i. 13. as appears from his contrasting this Passage to another cited from Psalm xlv. 6. Unto the SON he saith,

Thy THRONE, O God, is for ever and ever;
A SCEPTER of Righteousness is the SCEPTER of thy KINGDOM.

But unto which of the ANGELS said he at any time,

SIT thou on my right Hand, i. e. REIGN along with me,
Till I make thine Enemies thy Footstool?

Thus also in Ps. xxix. 10. and xlvii. 8. (if we may explain one part of the Period by the other,) to *sit on the Throne* signifies to *reign*.

JEHOVAH SITTETH upon the WATERS above the Firmament;
And JEHOVAH shall SIT KING for ever.

God REIGNETH over the Heathen;
God SITTETH on his holy THRONE.

And thus Zechar. vi. 13. *sitting on the Throne*, and *ruling*, seem to be equivalent. *He* (the MESSIAH) shall SIT and RULE upon his THRONE; and he shall be a Priest upon his THRONE. Which Words of Zechariah explain well these of the Psalmist.

— The Kings of the East sometimes made their Sons Partners of their Throne; and these Words may allude to that Custom. If so, *Sit on my right Hand*, must for this Reason also mean, *Sit on my Throne, and reign along with me*.

Ibid. Lin. 3. *Till I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*) To make his Enemies his Footstool, is in other Words, to give him the Necks of his Enemies to trample upon. Which was another Custom of the East (See Josh. x. 24.) and signifies, that all his Enemies should be made subject unto him.

Per. 2.

Per. 2. Lin. 1. *Shall deliver*) This Verb in Pl. XVIII. 16. signifies to reach forth the Hand, unless *jado*, his Hand, which is expressed in the parallel Place, Pl. CXLIV. 7. be dropped.

He reached forth his Hand from above, and laid hold of me;
He drew me out of many Waters.

Here also it signifies to reach forth, or deliver.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *The Scepter of thy Power out of Sion*) JEHOVAH, who reigned between the Cherubims in the Temple at Jerusalem or Sion, is represented as delivering to the MESSIAH from thence the Ensign of royal Command. In the same Manner he is represented, Pl. CXXVIII. 5. as blessing his People out of Sion. — The Patriarch Jacob, prophesying that the Scepter, or supreme Power, should not depart from Judah till the MESSIAH came, conveys his Prediction under the Image of a Lion, the King of Beasts, couching upon a Scepter; whom none dare rouse up, to take it from him. Gen. XLIX. 9, and 10.

Judah is a Lion's Whelp:

Thou art gone up, O my Son, from devouring the Prey.
He coucheth as a Lion, and lieth down
As a Lyoness; who shall rouse him up?

The Scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the Ruler's Staff from between his Feet,
Until Shiloh, or He whose Right it is, shall come;
And him shall Nations obey.

It is with Propriety therefore that the Psalmist represents the Scepter as delivered out of Sion (which was situated in the Tribe of Judah) to the MESSIAH; who, Revel. v. 5. is, in Allusion to Jacob's Prophecy, called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. — This Prophecy of Jacob seems to have been fulfilled, when the Scepter was delivered to the MESSIAH; which was at his Resurrection. If so, the Interval between that and the Destruction of the Jewish State, which was more than thirty Years, was rather Time graciously allowed the Jews, to acknowledge him who was possessed of the Scepter, than a Continuance of the supreme Power in their Hands.

Per. 3. Lin. 1. *Thy People shall freely offer themselves*) *Jat. Mada* has observed in his XXVIIth Discourse, that *nammaca nedahet* is an elliptical Expression for *nammaca nam nedabot*. The Metre requires a Word of one Syllable to complete the Verse; and therefore very probably the Word which this great Man supplies, did originally belong to the Text. However, whether it originally belonged to the Text, or is, by the Rules of the Hebrew Language, to be supplied, the literal Sense of the Words is, *Thy People shall be a People of Voluntarinesses*, or, *Thy People shall freely offer themselves*, that is, as Volunteers in thy Service. So these Words signify Judg. v. 2, and 9; and the Context shews, that they ought to be so translated here.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *On the Day when thou shalt assemble thy Forces*) Hebr. *In the Day of thine Army*. The Chaldee Paraphrast has it, *On the Day when thou shalt engage in Battle*.

Ibid. Lin. 3. *Upon the holy Hills*) that is, upon the Hills of Sion and Moriah, on which Jerusalem, the holy City, was built; according to the Psalmist,

Her Foundation is upon the HOLY HILLS:
JEHOVAH loveth the Gates of Sion,
More than all the Dwellings of Jacob.

David having spoken of the Army, in the 1st Line of this Period; and of the Day when it should assemble, in the 2^d; speaks in this, of the Place of Rendezvous, namely, the holy Hills. The Masoretical Copy indeed reads *על ההרים* in the Beauties of Holiness, which has given Birth to many idle Interpretations, and has led the Commentators to

to mix the literal Sense of this Period with the spiritual. How much better is it to read *בְּהַרֵּי קָדֶשׁ*, on the Hills of Holiness, as these two Hebrew Words occur together in Ps. 87. 1. and as Symmachus and St. Jerom read them here; the former rendering them *in montibus sanctis*, the latter in *montibus sanctis*? All the Difference between these two Readings lies in two similar Letters, which in Print are scarce distinguishable from each other; much less, in Manuscript.

Ibid. The Youth of thine Army) Hebr. *Thy Youth*. The Hebrews frequently use the Abstract for the Concrete. Thus Judg. v. 12. *Lead thy CAPTIVITY captive*, is used for *Lead thy CAPTIVES captive*. So here, *Thy YOUTH*, is put for *Thy YOUNG MEN*.

Ibid. Lin. 4. *The Youth of thine Army shall be like the Dew, &c.*) David having spoken of the Army, and of the Day and Place of Rendezvous in the former Part of the Period, describes in the latter, the State and Condition of it, namely, that it should consist of youthful and brave Soldiers, and that the Forces of it should be as numerous as the Drops of Morning Dew.

Hushai in his Advice to *Absalom* uses the same Comparison, 2 Sam. xvii. 11, 12. *Let all Israel be gathered together unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba — and we will encamp against David with Forces as numerous as the Dew which falleth upon the Ground.* — This Comparison of the Psalmist, which is lost in the Masoretical Text, Bp. Hare has nobly retrieved, only by restoring the Word, *tal*, Dew, to its proper Place.

Per. 4. *JEHOVAH* bath sworn, *Thou art a Priest, &c.*) An Appointment to the Priesthood does not break in upon the Image, which I have mentioned as running through this Psalm: for of old the Priesthood was consistent with regal Dignity. The two Characters were united in *Melchizedek* for instance, after whose Order the *MESSIAH* is here appointed Priest. — This Period, it must be confessed, comes in very abruptly, where it stands at present. I am apt to think, it originally followed the 2d Period, where it would come more properly. At least this is certain, that the *MESSIAH*, in whom this Prophecy was fulfilled, was made Priest after the Order of *Melchizedek* at the same time that the Scepter was delivered to him. In the next place, the 3d Period would very naturally introduce and connect with the 5th; whereas it has no Connection with the 4th. But let the Reader determine.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *Thou art a Priest for ever*) As the *MESSIAH* had no Predecessor in his Priesthood, so he was to have no Successor; but was to be a *Priest for ever*. Which was, and could only be fulfilled in *JESUS* when he rose from the Dead, that is, when he was possessed of *Life for ever*. As therefore his Priesthood commenced at his Resurrection, it is with the utmost Propriety, that the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Ch. v. 5. cites from the 2d Psalm this Prophecy, *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*; which was fulfilled in *JESUS' Resurrection*, to convince them that he was called of God to be a Priest.

Dr. Sykes, in his Note on Hebr. v. 5. tells us, that these Words, *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*, convey to us no Idea of a Resurrection, nor of any Priesthood. To an English Reader perhaps they may not: but the Question is, Whether they did not convey such Ideas to the Jews, when quoted from one of their Prophets to convince them, that their *MESSIAH* was to rise from the Dead, and that *JESUS* was called of God to be a Priest. That these Words conveyed to the Jews of Antioch, the Idea of a Resurrection, when quoted to this Purpose by St. Paul, Acts xiii. 33. cannot be doubted, if it be only supposed, that they understood the Propriety of their own Scriptures. See Note on the 14th Per. of the cxxxixth Psalm. And if these Words conveyed to the Jews of Antioch the Idea of a Resurrection, they would likewise convey to the Hebrews the Idea of a Priesthood, when quoted to prove that *JESUS* was called of God to be a Priest: Because they knew from the 4th Per. of the cxth Psalm, that their *MESSIAH* was to be a *Priest for ever*: And if a *Priest for ever*, that then his Priesthood, his Call and Consecration to it, must commence at his Resurrection, when he was to live for ever.

Per.

Per. 5. Lin. 1. *The Lord on thy right Hand,*) that is, the MESSIAH, whom JEHOVAH is said, Per. 1. to have placed at his right Hand. Since David useth the same Words in both these Periods, he must mean the same Person: In this Period therefore by a sudden Apostrophe he addresses himself to JEHOVAH. The *Apostrophe* is very common amongst *Eastern Writers*: but as it is not so amongst us, I have added in Italicks, *O JEHOVAH*, to suggest it.

Ibid. Lin. 2. *Shall smite Kings in the Day of his Wrath.*) Kings in the prophetick Language signify any Persons in Power, whatever their Titles be: Thus in *Pf. II. 2.* Kings are made equivalent to Rulers,

Why do the KINGS of the Earth assemble,
And the RULERS combine against JEHOVAH and against his Anointed?

and These are interpreted by the *Apostles*, Acts iv. 27. of *Herod the Tetrarch*, *Pontius Pilate*, and the Rulers of the *Jews*. From hence then, and from comparing these Words with David's Advice to the same Persons in that Psalm, which is looked upon to have some Affinity with this,

Be wise now therefore, O ye KINGS,

Kiss, or pay Homage to, the SON, lest he be ANGRY:

I am inclined to think, that the Kings, whom the MESSIAH is here said to smite in the Day of his Wrath, were the first Persecutors of JESUS and his Apostles; and more particularly, the Rulers of the Jewish State, who perished in the Subversion of it. These last, it is certain, fell Victims to the MESSIAH's Justice; and it was eminently the Day of his Wrath when he smote them, when he sent forth his Armies, destroyed those Murderers, and burnt up their City.

Per. 6. Lin. 1 and 2. *He shall execute Judgment amongst the Heathen; he shall fill the Field of Battle with dead Bodies*) i. e. The MESSIAH shall revenge the Blood of his Servants upon the Heathen. For their Cruelty in persecuting and destroying his People, he shall raise up others who shall destroy them in Battle. What is here briefly expressed, is fully described in *Revelat. xix.* from the 11th to the End. Out of his (the MESSIAH'S) Mouth goeth a sharp Sword, that with it he should smite the NATIONS, and he shall break them in pieces with a Rod of Iron—And an Angel cried with a loud Voice, saying to all the Fowls that fly in the midst of Heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the Supper of the great God: That ye may eat the Flesh of Kings, and the Flesh of Captains, and the Flesh of mighty Men, and the Flesh of Horses and their Riders, and the Flesh of all Men, both bond and free, both small and great—And these were slain by the Sword which proceeded out of his Mouth: and all the Fowls were filled with their Flesh.

Our Translators seem to have been conscious, that a Word in the Original has been dropped in this Period; for they have supplied in Italicks the Places. The *Chaldæe* Paraphrast supplied or found in his Copy *erec*, the Land. *L. Capel* and *Bp. Hare* think, that the Word *geot*, Vallies, has been dropped, because of its Similarity to the Word following. I have supplied with *Le Clerc*, what seems most suitable to the Context, the Field of Battle.

Ibid. Lin. 3. *He shall smite the Head of many Countries*) *Hebr. He shall smite the Head that reigneth* (for *malac* is understood) over a large Tract of Country. These Words seem more particularly to point at the *Roman Emperors*, who ruled over many Countries. And they have been fulfilled in the Destruction of those amongst them, who persecuted the Disciples of JESUS: but will perhaps be more eminently fulfilled in the Man of Sin, whom the Lord shall consume with the Breath of his Mouth, and destroy with the Brightness of his Coming. 2 Thess. 2. 8.

Per. 7. Lin. 1. *He shall drink of the Brook in the Way*) The MESSIAH shall be so intent on pursuing his Enemies, that like a Conqueror on a hasty March, he shall not stop to refresh himself, but take up with a Draught of Water from the first Brook he meets with on the Way.

Ibid.

Psalm. Lin. 2. He shall lift up his Head) This is sometimes expressed more fully thus, *He shall lift up his Head above all his Enemies round about him, that is, he shall triumph over them.*

N.B. In my Note on Per. 2^d, I have rendered *scattered* (Gen. XLIX. 10.) by *the Ruler's Staff*, because it is equivalent to *the Scepter*, and therefore (as *Bp. Hare* observes in his Note on Pl. XX. 7.) must signify an Ensign of Dignity and Command. So it signifies, Numb. XXI. 18. which Period, together with the foregoing, may be cleared perhaps by the following Version.

Then Israel sang this Song concerning the Well,
They sang in Turns concerning it;

The Princes dug the Well with the Lawgiver's Rod,
The Nobles of the People dug it with their Staves.

The *Israelites* seem to have obtained this Well of Water in the Wilderness through the Prayers of *Moses* and their Rulers. To do them Honour therefore, they *partially* represent them in this Song, (or rather Fragment of a Song) as having dug it with the *Rod* and *Staves*, which they carried in their Hands as Ensigns of Command. Hence too in After-times this Well was called *Ber-Elm*, or the *Well of the Mighty*.

In the same Note also, I have rendered *gammim* by *Nations*, including *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

THE END.

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